

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 29, 2010

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Republican Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senate Majority Leader Reid and Minority Leader McConnell:

We understand that President Obama and Secretary of State Clinton have recently urged the Senate to act on the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) with Russia during the lame duck session of the 111th Congress. While it is solely the Senate's duty to give advice and consent to the ratification of this treaty, the House of Representatives plays an essential role with regard to the appropriation of funds to modernize the nuclear weapons complex, stockpile and arsenal, as well as to conduct oversight of the implementation of the treaty. In light of this role, and because we have significant concerns with the treaty as it is written, we urge you not to consider it during the lame duck session and allow a thorough debate by the Senate in the 112th Congress.

It is our understanding that, in the latest version of its program for modernizing the nuclear weapons complex and stockpile, the Administration is proposing to spend approximately \$84 billion over ten years, which will have to be approved by the House. In advancing this proposal, the House could find itself in a circumstance where meeting its legislative responsibilities in the area of national security is made more difficult by the entry into force of New START.

Most importantly, many House Republicans believe this treaty may weaken the ability of the U.S. to defend itself against missile attacks. This is largely because the Administration has made indications to Russia that in the context of this treaty the U.S. will not pursue missile defense options that could affect the strategic balance between the two states.

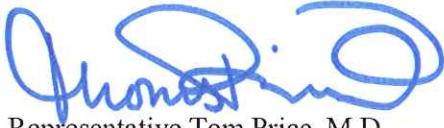
The Administration has also proven to show a lack of transparency during this process by refusing to provide senators with the full negotiating record or specific details of the Tauscher-Rybakov discussions. The Reagan Administration provided updates during the original negotiations to staff on the Arms Control Observer group. We believe Senators should not be a rubber stamp for the Administrations diplomatic agenda and should demand access for the treaty negotiation record. Furthermore, the hearing process for New START in the Senate has been biased. The overwhelming majority of the witnesses were treaty proponents.

Without proper hearings and Senate access to the treaty negotiating record, it is impossible for the Senate to attain a clear understanding of the treaty's provisions and its effect on our allies. It would be unwise to move forward so quickly and commit the U.S. to a treaty that only makes it more difficult for the House, along with the Senate, to draft defense authorizations and appropriations that will meet the nation's essential security requirements.

Because the United States and its allies remain vulnerable to attacks from various rogue nations, such as Iran and North Korea, it is imperative that the Administration not ratify this treaty unless the Senate has debated it thoroughly and has determined that it strengthens the ability to defend

ourselves and our allies against these threats. Hastily approving this treaty may well prove to be a mistake from which the nation cannot easily recover. Members of the House will have a role in implementation of this treaty pursuant to the constitutional responsibility to provide for the common defense of our nation. We respectfully request that you permit the Senate to debate this treaty in a careful and deliberate manner in the 112th Congress.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Price", with a large, stylized loop at the end.

Representative Tom Price, M.D.
Chairman, Republican Study Committee

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Trent Franks", with a large, stylized loop at the end.

Representative Trent Franks
RSC National Security Working Group Chairman